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Undressing *Alice*: Carroll's Symbolism of Life, Sex, and Death

Elizabeth Curtice

"Curiouser and curiouser!" cried Alice (she was so much surprised, that for a moment she quite forgot how to speak good English)" (13); and that is also the feeling that anyone gets reading Lewis Carroll's classic, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. It is a wonder how Carroll could create such memorable nonsense adventures about a particularly young girl named Alice. Critics believe his background and love for children make his classic memorable. Lewis Carroll's story has profound effects on children. It opens a child's mind to a different world of imagination, friendship, and growing up. "The Alice that grownups read is really a different work from the Alice that is read by children," (Wilson 11). Wilson says the prime source of the interest is the same, but the grownups understand it better. Adults find many layers of depth and symbolism in Carroll's work. Most critics discuss the symbolism that pertains to details of Victorian life, sex, and death. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is a classic book whose adventurous story delights children, and whose depth and metaphorical speech appeal to adults.

Many critics in discussing Carroll's life ask the question:

How did it happen that the Reverend Charles Dodgson [Lewis Carroll], thirty years of age, lecturer on geometry at Christ Church, Oxford, hitherto remarkable chiefly for his precision, on a single afternoon, while rowing up the Isis with a brother don and three little girls, parthenogenetically gave birth to one of the most famous stories of all time?

(Lennon 3)

To answer the question, one must look back at the life of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, or as we know him, Lewis Carroll. Dodgson was born the son of Frances Jane Lutwidge and the Reverend Charles Dodgson on January 27, 1832 at Daresbury, Cheshire. He was the oldest son and third child of eleven children, seven of whom were girls. He was the master of their ceremonies, inventor of games, magician, marionette theater manager, and editor of family journals (Nadel 45). As a boy, Lewis Carroll spent much of his time entertaining his brothers and sisters, "because his sisters were in the majority, he naturally acquired from an early age those special skills in amusing little girls, which he practiced so willingly for the rest of his life" (Hudson 235). He became "closely linked with his cultivation of child-friends, first and foremost of whom was Alice Liddell" (Nadel 4). He based his story on this friend.

People have no doubt that Alice's adventures have an immense attraction to children. They allow their young minds to be creative, find friendships, and mature. The novel is about a girl named Alice who chases a rabbit down a hole. During her adventures in Wonderland she visits the White Rabbit's house where she grows and shrinks. As her journey continues she meets a caterpillar and has a Tea Party with a Mad Hatter, March Hare, and Dormouse. Later Alice causes trouble in a garden full of card characters and finds herself at the Knave of Heart's trial, a courtroom scene which involves a "travesty trial" (Nadel 56). Just as the trial became unbearable, Alice's sister wakes her up. Carroll takes children from our world into his own where the imagination of any child is set loose. One must remember the whole adventure is a child's dream. Carroll's ingenuity allows Alice to have a tea party with a rabbit and a mouse, communicate with a caterpillar, and carry out a battle with a deck of cards.

Through her adventures she meets many friends, although all of the creatures give her a hard time with their "nonsense," none

of the animals cause her any harm. The Caterpillar finds mirth in teasing Alice with his pointed and formal verb games, but he also helps Alice by giving her a mushroom to grow larger. To a child, Alice changing sizes (a motif seen throughout the story) can also represent growing up. Children see adults as big and mature. A child relates being big to being in control. When Alice is lost, the bite of food helps her grow tall so she can look above the trees. While she is big she finds out that the characters of Wonderland are afraid of her size and therefore respect her. Besides being physically grown up, Alice also matures. At first she is confused, lonely, and in tears. However, she realizes that to get anywhere she must learn patience with the nonsense creatures and respect the Queen of Hearts.

Adults look deeper than just the character's "face value". They analyze Carroll's work and find ideas that pertain to symbols of Victorian events, death, and sex. Critics portray Mad Hatter, for instance, as crazy, because during the Victorian era hatmakers used mercury in their business and exposure to it caused brain damage (McCrumb 243). The Cheshire Cat is a direct symbol of the ideal of intellectual detachment; all cats are by nature detached and with its grin, this one becomes the amused observer: "It can disappear because it can abstract itself from its surroundings into a more interesting inner world; it appears only as a head because it is almost a disembodied intelligence; and only as a grin because it can impose an atmosphere without being present" (Empson 114). Other kinds of symbolism can be found in Carroll's book. The White Rabbit's fan, which causes Alice to almost vanish, represents dying and the discussion of the Caterpillar's metamorphosis implies death. Annihilation permeates the morbid atmosphere of the "enchanted garden." The Queen of Hearts acts as if she is the Goddess of Death, always yelling her barbarous, indiscriminate words, "Off with their heads!" (Senna 58).

Additionally, the story contains symbolism of sexual overtones.

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Empson describes the symbolic completeness of Alice's experience as "running the whole gamut; she's a father in getting down the hole, a foetus at the bottom, and can only be born by becoming a mother and producing her own amniotic fluid" (113). Alice runs down the rabbit hole after White Rabbit and suddenly finds herself falling down "what might be a very deep well." Here we have the best known symbol of coitus (Goldschmidt 112). Later, Alice enters a "long low hall" where she finds a number of doors, all locked. Symbolism of lock and key represents intercourse; the doors of normal size represent adult women that the dreamer disregards and centers in on the little door, which symbolizes a female child; the curtain before it represents the child's clothes (Goldschmidt 112). Many critics and analysts believe that Carroll was either mentally ill or perverse.

No matter what critics think, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is an excellent book for anyone to read. Children should savor the imaginative adventures and the friendships while they learn the responsibilities of growing up. Adults can also enjoy this book, either by absorbing themselves into Carroll's "nonsense" world, or by looking beyond the story into the symbolism. I recommend everyone to read the classic as an exciting tale of a young girl named Alice.

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Growing up in the Mexican-American Culture: A Literary Perspective

Erin Davis

The Mexican-American woman is provided with only two, completely contradictory role models: the pure Virgin Mary and the seductive prostitute. Left to fill one of these roles, the woman is persecuted regardless of her choice. This attitude also has repercussions for men who feel they must dominate and control helpless women. These sexist viewpoints are represented in five Chicano/a novels: *Intaglio* by Roberta Fernandez, *The Moths* by Helena Maria Viramontes, *Bless me Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya, *George Washington Gomez* by Americo Paredes, and *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros.

In Roberta Fernandez's novel *Intaglio*, the author poses opposition toward men's treatment of women. One character in particular expresses her disapproval of men's behavior:

These men think they are doing women a favor by showering us with so-called compliments. Piropos. They think we should be grateful for the attention they give us whether we want it or not. It's really self-indulgent on their part. (117)

The common myth that women want to be raped is also illustrated, to a certain extent, in one of the character's words to a young lady after witnessing the attempts of two young boys to flirt with her, "Secretly you're enjoying all the attention. You just don't want to admit it. These two guys—the Mondragones—were trying to get a smile out of you. But you were so high and mighty" (116). Here, the woman is presented as frigid for not surrendering to her whorish tendencies. The belief that women want to be raped implies that they can't help but succumb to the desires of men. Thus, the man is displayed as dominant and in

control of the whims of women. Not only does this attitude give men permission to defile women, but it segregates the sexes by assigning each specific roles to follow.

In Viramonte's short story "Growing" the essence of a Mexican woman is delivered straight from the mouth of a man:

TU ERES MUJER he thundered like a great voice above the heavens, and that was the end of any argument, any question, almost see the clouds parting, the thunderbolts breaking the tranquillity of her sex. (32)

Written in Spanish, the words "tu eres mujer" mean much more than the English words "you are woman." This is because the boundaries for being a woman in traditional Mexican culture are much narrower than in Anglo-American society. Specifically, Mexican women are limited to three possible roles: the mistress, wife or mother. First, a woman is almost always presented as sexually deviant for engaging in sexual activity despite the number of her partners, whereas, the more conquests a man has, the more valuable his worth as a person. The majority of the men in these novels require at least two women: one being a mistress to satisfy his most intimate needs and the other, his wife who will provide him with care for his children.

As a mother, the woman resembles the Virgin. She is free of sin and serves two distinct purposes: producing children and obeying her husband. As a mother and wife, the woman lacks independence and often sacrifices her identity as is demonstrated by the narrator in *The Moths*: "she could not leave him because she no longer owned herself. He owned her, her children owned her, and she needed them to live" (Viramontes 56). Almost as a rite of passage, the young lady who chooses to marry and have children must, in turn, give up her own sense of self. To the man, this loss of identity can be mistaken for a sign of weakness. And so, the male must treat the woman as if she were helpless. In "Snapshots" Viramontes

presents the woman almost as a child who cannot take care of herself. In one passage, a lady, remembering a portion of her life where she spent the majority of her time reliving her past through old photographs, recalls how her loving husband packed away her pictures to keep her from harm. She says, "He was good in that way. Like when he clipped the roses for me. He made sure the thorns were cut off so I wouldn't prick myself" (94). It seems as if, without her husband, she would not be able to manage and would end up, as she said, "hurting herself." The man takes special precautions, as one would with a child, to ensure his wife's safety. This treatment encourages the woman to fall into place, believing herself to be powerless and allowing the man to seize control.

Thus, the man's role is clear. He is the breadwinner and is in command of the fate of the woman. Again, in the Viramontes text, a male character states: ". . . then I took off my pants and I told her, 'Now you put them on,' and she did. Then I said, 'See! The pants fit me, not you. Don't forget it's me who wears them'. . ." (82). It is a rare occasion that the woman forgets. Rather, she conforms to her designated role: to obey. As the sole monetary support for the family, the man establishes reliance and dependence and strengthens his grasp. In the aforementioned novels, the men are dominant while the women, and in some cases female children, stay at home to tend to the family. Using these roles as guidelines, the adolescents in *Bless Me, Ultima*, *George Washington Gomez*, and *The House on Mango Street* struggle to develop their identities.

In Anaya's novel, *Bless Me, Ultima*, the main character is an intellectual boy named Antonio. Throughout his life, Antonio is subjected to negative attitudes towards sexuality. In the following example, the image of Rosie's, the local whorehouse, is vivid in Antonio's mind:

I knew that Rosie was evil, not like a witch, but evil in other

ways. Once the priest had preached in Spanish against the women who lived in Rosie's house and so I knew that her place was bad. Also, my mother admonished us to bow our heads when we passed in front of the house. (31)

Anaya makes another connection between evil and sexuality through Antonio's friend Samuel: " 'There is evil here,' Samuel said. He pointed to a clear plastic balloon beside the path" (72). The association of corruption with sex provides a confusing dilemma for Antonio who is approaching puberty. Under the influence of so many references to the girls at Rosie's, Antonio dreams about them and their house of sin. In his dream, Antonio will not enter the house because he is to become a priest, but his brothers taunt him and tell him that, "every man is delivered of woman, and must be fulfilled by a woman" (66). The only reference Antonio has for sexuality is Rosie and the evil that is connected with her house. Antonio must find a way to live with the knowledge that his father and brothers frequent such an immoral place, the belief that others have that it is inherent in men to be satisfied by a woman, and the condemning of such activities by his mother and the church. Antonio is torn between his sexual desires and their taboo nature. For an adolescent beginning to deal with his first sexual feelings, these opposing dilemmas pose quite a problem and only add to the chaos and confusion of growing up.

On a different level, Gualinto, in *George Washington Gomez*, must face the strict gender roles prescribed by his family and his school while shaping his identity. Gualinto's perception of his mother changes drastically during this time after witnessing her beat his sister uncontrollably. Ashamed of her daughter's premarital pregnancy, Gualinto's mother Maria proves to be an agent of patriarchy, supporting the idea that women are concubines and must yield to their lusty desires. She also prohibits her oldest daughter, Carmen, from taking a job, stating

that "both girls had the instincts of whores and that Carmen should not be walking the streets every Saturday evening" (227). Maria provides an extremely negative supposition about women for the impressionable Gualinto. This is especially difficult for Gualinto because he loves and respects his mother but disagrees with her behavior. Gualinto is confronted with one negative female role model after another, which affects his attitude, as is apparent when he agrees with his friend El Colorado's statement, "Girls are the dirtiest sonsabitches" (124). Relations with the opposite sex evolve during adolescence; however, one's views can be tainted by poor role models and negative stereotyping during this vulnerable time of identity seeking. These negative experiences with the opposite sex can affect one's identity and relations with others for the remainder of his/her life.

The narrator Esperanza, in *The House on Mango Street*, desires to escape her world of poverty and poor female role models and start a life on her own, free from the constraints of male ownership. When describing her dream house, she says, "Not a flat. Not an apartment in back. Not a man's house. Not a daddy's. A house all my own" (Cisneros 108). Growing up in a traditional Mexican-American neighborhood, she reacts to rather than falls into the pattern of her older friend Marin who believes "What matters is for the boys to see us and for us to see them" (27). Marin, who is primarily concerned with finding a husband who will take responsibility for her life, "is waiting for a car to stop, a star to fall, someone to change her life" (27). This represents society's belief that women cannot initiate change in their lives, but must wait for a man to come along and take care of them. Cisneros creates Esperanza to exemplify the hope that can exist amidst oppression. Esperanza is quite aware of the dangers of losing one's individuality and expresses this when she describes her grandmother, "She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow" (11). She symbolizes resistance to the typical Mexican woman, and

desires to possess the characteristics associated with a man: "I have begun my own private war. Simple. Sure, I am the one who leaves the table like a man without putting my chair back or picking up the plate" (89). While Esperanza is raised with the ideals of what her culture considers to be a proper woman, she silently wishes to take back the power given to men and to live her own life, away from her crumbling neighborhood, and liberated from conflicting traditions.

Another aspect of life that is touched by sex role stereotypes is spirituality. In *Bless Me, Ultima*, Antonio's father rejects religion, whereas his mother kneels to pray on every occasion. Perhaps this connection spurred Antonio's own beliefs which are consistent with the traditional gender roles. Antonio's view of the patriarchal God is an authoritarian figure who is not always forgiving, but is punishing. However, he sees the Virgin as forgiving, quiet and peaceful. No doubt this is Antonio's perception of men and women, that women, cunning and sweet, can persuade the powerful men to forgive. Viramontes poses a comparable viewpoint in her short story "The Broken Web." A woman, after killing her husband because she is tired of his treatment of her and of "his God," reflects, "Her children in time would forgive her. But God? He would never understand; he was man, too" (56). The woman has transposed her feelings about her negative experiences with men to her feelings about God. Because the Catholic church only recognizes God as being male, it would be extremely difficult for someone who is uncomfortable with men to place his/her trust in a male divine figure.

Although sex role stereotypes exist cross-culturally, in these depictions of the Mexican-American culture, they seem to be particularly defined and generally adhered to. There seems to be a cultural conjecture that women will stay at home caring for her family and that she will act in one of three manners: promiscuously, piously, or obediently. Men, on the other hand,

are characterized as the sole support system and as having the upper hand. Certainly these models have a significant impact on the forming of identity and the beliefs of impressionable young adolescents. While Paredes, Fernandez, Rivera, Anaya, and Cisneros all present different issues in their novels, each paints a strong image in the mind of the reader of growing up in the Mexican-American culture.

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Reexamining the American Dream

Ricardo Chavira

Everybody's gotta have a dream, honey. It keeps them all together, like all those huddled masses that came to Ellis Island. They had their dreams, some of them even thought that the streets of this country were paved of gold. (Sanchez-Scott 119)

Although Felix Sanchez is only a fictional character in the play *Latina*, there is nothing theatrical about the dream that he and thousands of real-life immigrants have chased—the American Dream. They came in search of freedom and justice immortalized by Western individualism and belief in the spirit of the “self.” But what about the people who were already here? The first European explorers did not take into consideration the “America” that pre-existed them: the people, their dreams and the natural collective spirit these people embodied. Instead, Western man created a “new” society, imposing upon the existing culture’s form of language, religion and cultural identity. By the suppression of the civilizations of these “inferior” peoples, native Americans were forced to acculturate to Western language and lifestyle. These explorers created foundations for present-day U.S. conflicts concerning cultural identity and bilingual education.

Cabeza de Vaca journeyed to the New World in search of fortunes for the Spanish crown. After his arrival, de Vaca was captured by Indians. A prisoner in a foreign world, de Vaca was forced to learn Indian culture as a means of survival. He discovered the harsh realities of this world, and realized the natives’ fear of Western rule: “[T]hey had related how the Christians. . . had come through the land destroying . . . while those who had been able to escape were wandering like fugitives” (Bruce-Novoa 138). Native Americans wanted no part of a

cultural identity that deceived them with “. . . cards, money, fiddle, whiskey, and blood corruption” (Wiget 183).

When freed from captivity, de Vaca used the information he learned about native society not to protect them, but to exploit them. De Vaca realized the significance of the human commodity, and used Christianity “. . . not simply [for] conversion . . . but the complete education and Hispanicization of Indian society” (Muford 112). He returned to Spain with the vision of absorbing the Indian population into Spanish society by means of conversion. De Vaca, like so many other explorers, denied the Native Americans identity; the only options supplied to the them were assimilation, slavery, or death. Native Americans were looked upon as inferior, and even if they were incorporated into Western society, they would never be accepted because, “[o]ne cannot be equal with the conquerors if one is portrayed as the conquered” (DeSoto 79). The Indians were nothing more than a defeated race in the eyes of Western society, and this stigma would remain for many generations.

To assure total domination over native Americans and their lands, explorers had to break the language barrier. Columbus became aware of the diversity of native cultures and their languages, noticing that “. . . there are a thousand different dialects, one tribe not understanding the other” (Mulford 125). But it took the work of Elio de Nebrija to understand the power of language. Nebrija’s work, *Grammatica Castellana*, called for the organization of the Spanish language under one rule of grammar. His hope was to create a “standardized mother tongue” (Ilich 68) that would benefit the Spanish crown in her expansion into the New World. Nebrija knew he was laying the foundation for a monolingual society that, if successful in the New World, could easily assimilate native cultures.

Soon Your Majesty will have placed her yoke upon many barbarians who speak outlandish tongues. [T]hese people shall

stand in . . . need for the language we will bring with us. My grammar shall serve to impart them the Castilian tongue. . .
(Illich 68-9)

Nebrija's proposal was initially rejected, but his proposition planted the seeds that would develop into the modern political battle over the United States becoming an English-only nation. These early explorers of Western society are to blame for the negative attitudes surrounding the racial and ethnic identities that are spirit of this nation. The Western influence over American society is apparent in every textbook and classroom in this nation. Americans are only now coming to terms with the historical diversity of this land and the number of ethnic prefixes that can be placed in front of the identity "American." Yet there are political leaders in this country who would mandate English-only laws, putting an end to bilingual education and cultural diversity. Some politicians believe that having one nation under one language will be a return to the original American character. A recent article in *La Prensa* asserts that, "[t]hose advocating linguistic isolationism appear . . . misinformed if their contention is that America was ever a monocultural society" (Perez 2-A).

A one language society will not solve anything. What America needs is more bilingual education, giving our children a more comprehensive view of the world, as well as balancing the competition with the bi- and trilingual children of Europe and Asia. In his submission to *Hispanic Law Journal*, David DeSoto expands on the negative effects of a monolingual society. In a school system where only one language may be spoken, that language. . . becomes the norm. By forcing upper-class Anglo-American speech on minorities, the school house becomes a taunting ground. . . (DeSoto 80).

Bilingual education is necessary to allow people from different socioeconomic backgrounds the chance to learn about one another's culture. The fact of the matter is that language and

identity go hand-in-hand. To have a monolingual society is to create monocultural society, and this country is too diverse to embrace this kind of discrimination.

Being of Mexican-American descent, I can identify with both my German immigrant side and my native Mexicano side. My great-grandfather on my mother's side was probably much like the character Felix Sanchez who immigrated to the new world to fulfill his dreams of success. On my father's side, my great-great-grandfather probably watched the slow destruction of his dreams with the invasion of Europeans. Fortunately for me, I have been able to learn the ways and beliefs of both sides of my cultural identity. I only hope that my children will be able to do the same.

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¿Hablamos el Mismo Español?

Elizabeth M. Salazar

A causa de que tenía muy poco tiempo para escribir esta columna, solamente le hice esta pregunta a veinte personas: <<¿Disculpe, usted habla español>>? De esas veinte personas nueve contestaron con confianza que sí lo hablaban con soltura, seis respondieron que lo hablaban pero <<mocho>>, otros tres contestaron que solamente lo entendían pero no lo hablaban, y finalmente dos me respondieron con franqueza que solamente entendían palabras como las del famoso libro "Dos Mundos". Después de saber el nivel de español que tenían las personas les hice otra pregunta: ¿Que significado tiene la palabra <<fregador>>?

Algunos me miraban sin ninguna expresión, otros rápidamente sabían o lo inventaban. Por ejemplo, una jovencita de Guadalajara me dijo <<Hay pues, muy fácil; es el lugar en donde se lavan las cacerolas>>. Otra jovencita me dijo un poco avergonzada <<pues yo creo que quiere decir algo como una persona que te molesta mucho, esa persona sería una fregadora>>. Finalmente, un joven después de pensar por un buen rato respondió, <<un fregador es lo mismo que un estafador, o en otras palabras, un tramposo>>.

Increíble, la misma palabra con una diversidad de definiciones. Y aún todos creemos que hablamos el mismo idioma. La lengua española la hemos transformado para adaptarla a nuestros ambientes. Por ejemplo, la palabra ilustrada al principio de esta columna <<mocho>>. Así fue como ciertas personas describieron su fluidez en español. ¿Pero qué significa <<mocho>>? Para ellos es el no poder pronunciar las palabras correctamente, y el no poder terminar una frase sin incluir una palabra en inglés. El diccionario nos explica que <<mocho>> significa <<sin punta, o falta de un miembro del cuerpo, especialmente una pierna o brazo>>. ¿Que tiene que ver el significado de <<mocho>> con la manera en que uno se expresa? La palabra <<mocho>>, aunque

no tiene nada que ver con el poder hablar español con fluidez tiene la conotación que le hemos aplicado. Esta encuesta es solamente un ejemplo de las muchas maneras en las cuales transformamos palabras para el uso diario. Todos creemos que hablamos español, ¿pero será lo mismo?

Recognizing Patterns

Ned Meneses

The idea that all art forms are made of recognizable patterns is of great importance. It is difficult to express something artistic in a form other than itself. A painting may have a parallel in one of its sister arts as in music. If there existed underlying patterns, then the system would remain the same, but the mere fact that there is a palpable structure underneath the apparently incomprehensible whole of a creative endeavor means that this form could be expressed in different media.

The elements of an art form give it form. In dance, for instance, there is technical wording for specific sequences, positions on stage, as well as specific movements. There is physical as well as visual balance, visual weight in relation to physical weight, movements of bodies in relation to other bodies, plus many others. At any level, dance will portray a state of being. When asked to express a specific feeling most dancers will probably use many of the same movements. To portray a joyful character a dancer is likely to work with energetic, enlivening motions. There is a decisive underlying pattern that gives a dancer a means for telling a story. There is a common ground of human experience from which an artist draws inspiration in the attempt to mirror life.

It is always much easier to say what an art form is rather than what it is not. Dance is not just movement. It is choreographed, perhaps spontaneously, but it is choreographed. In other art forms, unity with variety is effective in creating certain moods. I'm sure that this is possible in dance also. I do recognize the difficulty of dance without much repetition lies in its sequential existence. Dance exists in time only, but this is also relative. Rudolph Arnheim, an art analyst, brilliantly arranged many universal elements to describe the changes in interpretation when components in a composition are reordered. His work deals with

conscious as well as subconscious recognition of centers in our lives such as gravity. In any such statement simplicity leads to order which, in turn, makes a pattern highly visible. It is easier to grasp that which is at its lowest or simplest state. Arnheim pointed out that in architecture, as in other areas of life, form should project the object's purpose, otherwise there can be no orderly statements, and without these statements there is no communication, no art.

Both dance and architecture are temporal forms. Dance can only be experienced through time. It is like a cathedral whose halls one must walk to experience the forms that give it meaning. What is temporal is not permanent (no work is totally permanent). The issue of permanence in a work of art is essential to the acceptance of computer graphics as art in the mainstream world of art. A ceramic piece is an expression that remains static and unchanging since its creation. A painting hanging from the wall of a museum is self-reliant, it needs no one to remain there. Anything done on a computer is dependent upon several things. It needs to be constantly plugged in to a source of electricity to be appreciated. It also cannot be separated from a heavysset monitor and the computer itself. The method of creation today is also rather artificial. A keyboard is no match for a hand that knows how to feel a line. It is an awkward establishment between man and machine where man is better capable of thought and computer of action. Is art an individual endeavor? The answer to that is typically "yes". Every idea is the product of a single mind. It was witnessed by the artist through its full development. A work in a computer cannot be understood to its lowest elements, that being the maze of circuitry. Art in the computer, like performing art, is temporal. What is enduring through the passing of time is universal, and to express the universal we need something that is lasting.

Ultimately, the underlying patterns provide connections. The synthesis of these redefine our notions of art. The computer is

mathematical in nature, and, after all, a mathematician is a maker of patterns. Computer art will be accepted like performing arts, and it will certainly take its place along with the other arts. The medium is fitting for the form of an increasingly complicated world.

Temptation in Paradise: The Lure of Columbus' Vision

John Tedesco

Christopher Columbus was the first explorer to portray The New World as a lush and fertile place to the men who came to ravish her. Many Europeans colonized America because they were seduced by the everlasting bounty promised to them by explorers such as Columbus. His was an enticing vision—by comparing the New World to the Garden of Eden, he implied both a temporal and spiritual copiousness. The New World appealed to the Crown, which wanted money, and the Church, which wanted souls. It had both in natural resources and heathen Indians.

But a stark contrast existed between the paradise Columbus presented and the world colonists discovered when they arrived. Columbus believed—or wanted his majesty and benefactor to believe—that the world was not round “but the shape of a pear, which is round everywhere except at the stalk, where it juts out a long way; or that it is like a round ball, on part of which is something like a woman’s nipple. This point on which the protuberance stands is the highest and nearest to the sky” (Columbus 126). To the European reading of such a place, who had no way of seeing a reality other than Columbus’, the portrait must have been tempting. It was a paradise ripe for the taking, a paradise that was forever fruitful and nourishing, like a “woman’s nipple,” and close to God, “highest and nearest to the sky.”

Columbus also wrote about the inhabitants of this Garden. Although they were not Christian, the natives were innocent like Adam and Eve and eager for God’s grace, for they “would, upon being directed, make the sign of the cross, and repeat the *Salve* and *Ave Maria* with the hands extended toward heaven” (121). Columbus defined the land and the people, establishing an

inviting illusion of the New World.

But the colonists and missionaries who were driven to the Americas by this vision quickly learned that paradise would not grant her favors so easily, nor were the natives so willing to succumb to Christianity. The movie *Black Robe* explores the shadowy New World when a young Jesuit named Fr. Laforgue, who is called "Black Robe" by the Indians, embarks on a journey to uncover what has happened to another mission upriver. A bitter winter is approaching and less pious heads would have waited for the spring before beginning the journey, but Fr. Laforgue trusts God will deliver him safely to his destination. Accompanying the Jesuit are the Chief of the Algonquin Indians, his wife, daughter, about a dozen other tribe members, and a young Frenchman named Daniel, who can speak the native language proficiently.

Black Robe sifts past the differences between the Old and New World and exposes nuggets inherent in each culture. It begins with a meeting between the Chief of the Algonquin Indians and the Governor of the French settlement. From the outset, similarities between the two cultures become apparent. The French and Indian leaders both adorn themselves with fancy dress and their people dance and sing around fires. As the camera jumps back and forth between the two peoples, at times it is hard to tell who the Indians are and who the French are. One Frenchman, observing the governor walk by in his barbaric attire, quips, "Look at him dressed like a savage chieftain. We're not colonizing the Indians, they're colonizing us" (*Black Robe*).

The two worlds are alike in spiritual ways as well. Sin, or what Fr. Laforgue perceives as sin, pervades both cultures. During their journey, the party encounters no paradise but instead a Hawthornean nightmare of gloomy forests and sinister wilderness. The further they travel, the more the land tempts and corrupts them, resembling the way Young Goodman Brown's faith remains strong at the beginning of his journey yet falters

with each step into the forest. In this way, the faith and idealism of another goodman—Fr. Laforgue—is challenged. He wants to guide Daniel along a path of faith, but is powerless when Daniel falls in love with the Chief's daughter and becomes her lover. Such a seduction ruins Daniel's aspirations to join the Jesuits. Again, when the party travels farther and is captured by an enemy tribe, Fr. Laforgue watches passively as the Indian princess saves them when she seduces the guard and knocks him unconscious as he is swooning with pleasure. Her sinful fornication guarantees their salvation.

Fr. Laforgue cannot escape sin in this wild Eden. The arching branches of the trees bring to mind the arches of a cathedral, reminding him of his religion and the guilt that accompanies it. Old World flagellism and new World torture intertwine when Laforgue whips himself with the branch of a fallen tree—chastisement for Daniel's making love to the Indian Princess. The broken tree symbolizes the faith of Fr. Laforgue, cracked in half and used to reprove himself. His penance resembles the punishment rendered by the gauntlet he must run through when the party is captured by the enemy tribe. Each blow he gives himself foreshadows the blows of the arch-like clubs of the gauntlet, which resemble the arching branches of the forest, and thus the cathedral. Both his culture and Indian culture are the same—at times violent and unforgiving, hardly the paradise Columbus had promised.

Men like Fr. Laforgue believed they came to spread the glory of God to an innocent people. *Black Robe* shows us that the Indians were actually complex in culture and character, resembling the Europeans in many ways. When the hostile tribe forces Laforgue's party to suffer the humiliation of singing naked, the Indian Chief who is their guide begins an Indian song, while Laforgue and Daniel sing a Latin hymn. Both songs originated in separate cultures; here they provide an eerie counterpoint to each other, molding into something beautiful in their likeness.

Stripped of all cultural differences, Indian and Frenchman are for an instant equal.

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Tackling Freud's Penis

Michael Ryan

The radical feminist philosophy of segregating women from men to insure the demise of patriarchy has led many to examine the dynamics of our patriarchal system. This opens the door to examining the possibility of a "systemic" infection infused deeply in the psyche of most humans, an infection so insidious that it reaches every cell of our being. That all our perceptions carry the likelihood of contamination forces women, and men who care enough to actually examine the arguments, to face a different and all too probable reality than that in which most people think they live. Within this reality exist forces that lie beneath the surface, seek to perpetuate what for most people is "nature," and lie so ingrained as to be invisible. From these invisible roots rise the theories and contentions of psychoanalytical feminists. These feminists contend that Freud, rather than providing particular insight into the "human" psyche, provided a detailed road map of the means by which patriarchy is instilled into children. Both radical and psychoanalytical feminists, therefore, walk hand-in-hand, their theories becoming a series of stark awakenings, one resting upon the premise of the other. Without the insight of the existence of patriarchy, psychoanalytical feminists would have no base from which to question the norms attached to psychological thought.

From radical feminist work defining patriarchy as a mode of being, the obvious next step would lead to an attempt to understand how it functions, and functions so well, within the confines of our society. Once this awakening occurs, the ramifications and implications boggle the mind while, at the same time, explain some of the motivations that seem inherent within our society such as how—in this day and time—educated men can still consider their wives as property. The absolute pervasiveness of patriarchy couples with the societal acceptance

of it as “nature’s way” and then becomes imbedded so deeply that divorcing perceptions from this way of thinking becomes an exercise of Amazonian proportions. But this same pervasiveness that tunnels perception also lends credence to the argument that the system exists by virtue of this pervasiveness. Consider the plight of woman as property despite an educational system that teaches the opposite. The word pervasive gains meaning when the work of the psychoanalytical feminist couples with radical feminist premises to lay open the machinations of the patriarchal system. Shulamith Firestone’s initial postulates about biological reproduction gave rise to Kate Millett’s subsequent premise of gender perception solely as a factor of socialization. This enabled psychoanalytical feminist to widen the parameters of Freud’s insight into a stark “how-to” scenario of patriarchal propagation. This reinterpretation effectively placed the causal effects of patriarchy within the purview of the nuclear family—making it a universal mechanism and couching it in the safety of continuing the species. As it now stands, Firestone deserves more credit than she receives since biological reproduction does—indeed—place new, impressionable human beings directly into the grinding mechanism of patriarchy. Psychoanalytical feminism has simply redefined the concept of biological determinism beyond genetics, drawing it into the sphere of psychology and socialization.

The gripping premise of radical feminism, that a “system” of patriarchy exists, seems obvious to me after a short period of examining how “life” treats me as a male in comparison to how it treats women. While I am unable to entirely buy into the causal effects raised by both radical and psychoanalytical feminists without considering commoditization as well—since I think that both the economic and social system intertwine in ways that defy separation—both disciplines broaden my conceptual framework by allowing me to conceive of the system as a whole. This freedom of insight comes from deparameterizing the types

of feminist thought and rises from psychoanalytical feminists who exposed the dynamics within the family—delineated by Freud—as a tool that patriarchy has molded into the system. Molded so well, in fact, that species propagation practically guarantees the simultaneous propagation of patriarchy. This opens the consciousness to reasons for patriarchal success.

Socialization within our system revolves around—and is the responsibility of—the family—which is viewed in its own right as an entity, practically an individual. It's as though inoculation into patriarchy occurs at birth. Is this that far from Firestone's premise of biological determinism? The system's demand for division of labor—for the purpose of capitalizing on virtually everything, including nature—follows to insure male ascendancy and utilizes the family dynamic to inoculate the boy-child with the seed of patriarchal power and taunt the girl-child with the unattainable. Thank you, Mr. Freud. Since the boy-child can become the man—the perceived source of power—a progression is established. This progression essentially turns the human desire and need for some power—freedom—into a mechanism that resembles the capitalistic principle of greed. In this light, Freud's latency stage may alternately be viewed as that time in which human beings rebel against an innately perceived wrong, finally succumbing to the wrong simply to live, because “that is the way life is.” I see the problems that women face as a by-product—rather than a “conspiracy”—of the system. Since patriarchy—by definition—focuses on the boy-child's ascendancy to the throne of power, it leaves the girl child to her own devices available to the girl-child since it consumes those needed by the boy-child. This consumption leaves the girl-child powerless, which society then perceives as neediness fulfilled by the man. It's a complete circle. And the very nature of this by-product function ends up serving patriarchy by removing guilt in a real substantial way from men. Within the family dynamic this produces the rationale for assuming “nature” as a causal effect.

Since this becomes the way “nature” intended, men need feel no shame for the plight of women nor any need for change.

The problem comes when I—as a man—seek my humanity. I believe neither men nor women will attain humanity alone. Only by working in concert will we succeed. By virtue of the patriarchal system, it falls to women to light the path since I—as a man—am blind to its machinations. In the end, I think we will be human, and we’ll enter humanity together, hand-in-hand, at the same time, having inoculated each other against the systemic infection known as patriarchy.

***Miss Saigon* : What does it say?**

Nguyen Quang Nhut

Miss Saigon was an immensely popular Broadway musical last summer about an American soldier who falls in love with a native girl during the Vietnam War. It was an expensive carbon copy of *Madame Butterfly* with a few variations to accommodate the theme.

I was deeply disappointed and offended by the musical because it was an unfair representation of my country. Its plot centered around the whorehouses of Saigon during the Vietnam War and made a star and lovable character out of the "Engineer" who is a pimp and opportunist to say the least. I wouldn't claim that the playwright's view was wrong, but the story's implications about Vietnam have been misleading.

First, the Vietnam War was not about communism or democracy. The American government projected that image as an excuse to intervene-probably to protect its own interest in Asia. The civil war was caused by the irreconcilable economic differences between two regions. At that time, the South bathed comfortably in a sea of commerce and wealth while the North was like a crippled beggar looking for handouts. The North didn't have many ports and the region was infertile. It was only a matter of time until the country erupted in civil war. Although the North originally had good intentions, they were besieged with corruption and the new state became a dictatorship.

The war brought many bad times and opportunist used the occasion to promote bars and prostitution. *Miss Saigon* graphically portrays these scenes and implies that the girls just want a free visa to the U.S. which saddens me to the brink of tears because I know that most of the women were forced into that lifestyle. About 20 percent of those women were *spoils of war* or their entire families perished during an attack and a pimp took them in. The remaining 80 percent became prostitutes to

keep their families from starving to death. Their brothers, fathers or husbands were away at war and the American dollar could buy food for at least a couple of days. The greatest attribute of the Vietnamese culture is that the women are willing to sacrifice themselves for their families. An example of this is the true account of a mother and her two daughters who are stranded on an island with no victuals. One of her daughters got sick and during an hallucination stemming from hunger repeatedly moaned for a taste of meat. Brokenhearted at the sight, the mother went around the island and came back with a slice of meat. Later that night, the older daughter found her mother dying of blood loss. Fortunately, a fishing boat found them in time and rescued the trio. Although the prostitutes never had to sacrifice themselves to such an extent, they gave their virginity so that the rest of their family wouldn't die. I am not applauding prostitution, but I want the reader to understand the circumstances.

The musical made an interesting point that Vietnamese refugees seek "*life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*" in the United States. I am filled with rage and mixed emotions when I hear the younger generations praise America's "generosity" and the opportunities they will have here. After all, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to go to college and my family wouldn't have owned a house, two businesses, and four cars. Of course all this has provided happiness, or has it?

The rage I feel evolves from the silent sacrifice which none seems to hear. It screams so loudly to me that I am perplexed about why the younger generations are deaf to it. Our parents have been taken away from an environment in which they have shared their joys, youths, and memories into a foreign land where they cannot speak the language. Most are thrust at the bottom of the economic pit and slowly crawl towards stability. Why can't they open their eyes and witness the toils of their people? Can they not see their relatives on the bottom of the sea accompanied by others who have had the same fate? Or maybe they are blind

to the ocean of tears shed by parents sending off their children to
freedom.

Fantastic Odyssey

Dora Alicia Gonzales

Homer uses cunning imagery to paint a picture of Odysseus and the many adventures that he encounters as he desperately tries to return home. At the completion of Book 5 of *The Odyssey*, the reader is taken to Scheria, home of the Phaeacians. Odysseus staggers onto the shore of the island after battling Poseidon's forceful winds in the sea. Saved from drowning by Athene and Leucothea, he immediately begins to search for a safe place to rest his weary body.

"He went on into the wood; he found it near the water / In the clearing around, and came upon two bushes growing / From the same place, one of wild olive, one of tame" (5.475-477). Odysseus decides to take shelter among the olive bushes. The sheer irony of Odysseus' plight is that he lost a palace and now possesses only an olive bush for a home. Odysseus faces a tumultuous time in his life. He is stripped of all his possessions. He no longer has a wife, son, home, servants or even clothing on his back. He is nude and is as natural as the elements.

Odysseus is like the intertwined olive bushes. The bushes are unique because even though they are separate entities, they both originate from the same root. Odysseus is both wild and tame, like the bushes. The wild part of him consists of a god, a warrior and an invincible mortal. The tame part of him combines a civilized leader with a poet, a husband, a father and a skilled craftsman.

Odysseus is more than just a war hero. He is an all-encompassing human being who is able to incorporate physical valor and prowess with intellect, quick wit, subtlety and self-discipline. In other words, he possesses both brain and brawn.

The olive bush is entwined so tightly that it protects itself from the hazards of nature: "And the shining sun never struck them

with its beams, / Nor did rain ever reach through them, so thick/
Did they grow over and under each other” (5.479-481). It is untouched by weather just like Olympos: “When she had said this, the bright-eyed Athene went off / To Olympos, where they say the gods’ seat is forever / Secure” (6.41-43). “It is not shaken with winds and is never wet / With rain, nor does snow fall there, but a cloudless clarity / Spreads far upon it, and a white gleam runs over it” (5.43-45).

Like the olive bush, Odysseus retains a thick inner and outer skin that protects him even in the most ill-fated of circumstances. Odysseus is successful in adapting his behavior to the predicaments in which he finds himself, while he always maintains a realistic conception of his self-interest and his ultimate goals.

“He lay down in the middle, heaping the fallen leaves over him , / As a man may cover a torch with black embers / At the edge of a field, where no neighbors may be by , / And save the fire’s seed, so he need not light it from elsewhere” (5.487-490). Like black embers cover a torch, the abundant leaves cover Odysseus. His body is covered as an eyelid might cover an eye. His lodging is located in a remote, uninhabited part of a field. He is away from all civilization and finds himself alone in raw nature. By returning to the elements in nature, Odysseus is able to cleanse his soul from the dehumanizing experiences of the Trojan War. Furthermore, he can “find himself” and return to take his place in society.

The fire-seed represents his spirit, his knowledge, his consciousness, his divinity, his will to live and his desire to reach home. Odysseus is the fire-seed that has not died. Regardless of how fate burns him, Odysseus continues to brush off his burnt skin’s embers. Furthermore, he will re-root and sustain his life force in order to reclaim his home and destroy the treacherous suitors.

Athene is always watching over Odysseus, like a guardian

angel. She sheds sleep on his eyes when he is fatigued and comes to his rescue when he is in trouble. He is touched by Athene. The most striking image of this particular Homeric simile is the dualism of Odysseus. He is both human and divine. Homer never separates gods and mortals because they are intertwined like the olive bush. The gods and mortals seek one another out for their very existence.

Finally, Odysseus takes progressive steps to get closer to his home and family. Reborn in nature, he strives to return to civilization. His cosmos is Ithaca. Once Odysseus reaches his homeland, he can be in harmony with himself and the cosmos.

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Heroism Within

Chelsea Broughton

Upon one's first look at *The Iliad* and *Kagemusha*, a current Japanese film about warring 12th century clans, one might not see any similarities between the main characters and the action contained in each epic. However, after closer inspection, one may find similarities in the processes that take place within both Achilles and the thief of the film. These two characters are both involved in a world in which heroism is an ideal attribute and is defined externally. In other words, in order to be heroic, one must demonstrate some sort of action to be perceived as heroic by others. Thus, both characters respond to something greater than themselves and, in doing so, the actions and beliefs of those around them become irrelevant. In both *The Iliad* and *Kagemusha* heroism begins as a collection of actions to be approved of by others and is transformed within the main characters into something that need only be validated within.

At the opening of *The Iliad*, honor is a characteristic highly prized by all. Achilles' rage is spawned by what he perceives to be an insult to his honor by Agamemnon. One gains honor by slaughtering the enemy quickly and by overcoming tremendous odds in battle. One's portion of the loot collected was generally determined by one's worth in battle, thereby being a measurement of one's honor. Achilles is in harmony with that definition of honor. However, when Agamemnon takes away a portion of Achilles' loot, the girl Briseis, Achilles' honor is insulted. As Agamemnon himself boasts to Achilles, "...I will be there in person to take at your tents / to take Briseis in all her beauty, your own prize- / so you can learn just how much greater I am than you..." (Homer 1.217-19). At this moment Achilles' rage begins to mount. Refusing to help Agamemnon's cause, Achilles then retreats with his army back to his ship. Achilles was given honor by the approval of his fellow warriors and, just as easily,

it is taken away. His level of honor is entirely dependent upon others.

Achilles has restored a peaceful environment for himself as he is isolated from the harsh brutality of war. Although the exact means of the process is not made evident to the reader, a change has overcome Achilles by the time the embassy of Odysseus, Ajax, and Phoenix is sent to him. He seems much more peaceful here and less warlike. In fact, he disclaims the benefits of war and cites its needlessness, realizing that the same fate awaits him whether or not others see him as honorable, and that there is more to life than the destruction of other human beings. As the embassy struggles to convince Achilles to return to battle, Achilles replies that there is

One and the same lot for the man who hangs back
and the man who battles hard. The same honor waits
for the coward and the brave. They both go down to Death,
the fighter who shirks, the one who works to exhaustion.
And what's laid up for me, what pittance? Nothing-
and after suffering hardships, year in, year out,
staking my life on the mortal risks of war. (Homer 9.385-91)

A change in thought and belief overcomes Achilles. One may ask at this point if he is resigned to do without honor or if, perhaps, honor is created in a different way.

Achilles is later brought back into the action of the epic after Patroclus dies. Achilles' one true friend is killed and he is fraught with grief. Here is where Achilles brings in a transformed perception of honor. Achilles returns to battle, but it seems that now he has little use for the idea of using skill in battle to impress others and gain honor. He battles now for the sake of Patroclus. Achilles fights to avenge his death. Later, he holds a grand funeral for Patroclus where he gives generous prizes to those who participate in the games. He presents Nestor with a prize, even

though he did not participate. In this manner, and by mourning so dramatically for Patroclus, Achilles demonstrates honor through recognizing friendship and loyalty to it. He remains a loyal friend to Patroclus even as they are parted by death. Achilles is also incredibly generous to his companions at the games. In this way, we see Achilles giving up the old definition of honor as measured by material wealth in order to submit to a new definition of honor in the recognition of friends. Achilles no longer needs to be held by the impression that he makes on others. Now, he defines his honor for himself. He does what he feels is right and internally assesses his own honor. It is no longer distributed and retracted by others.

The thief in *Kagemusha* follows a much different path to redefine honor than the warrior Achilles. He begins completely devoid of any sort of redeemable honor, but learns the meaning of heroism by creating the emperor Shingen. The thief, due to his incredible likeness to the king, is forced to take the emperor's place in order to deflect the threat to Shingen's life. In doing so, the thief studies and re-creates the mannerisms and persona of Shingen. Shingen was the most respected member of his community and was greatly loved and admired. The thief struggles greatly to suppress his own identity in order to represent Shingen successfully, but ends up actually possessing honor. This occurs at one moment when he is forced to carry out courage through immobility. Honor in that culture is displayed by not moving. If one has enough courage to stay put when danger threatens, others then view that person as honorable. Certainly, specific outward actions such as bravery in battle, bring one honor; yet it is the confidence that the emperor and his entourage inspire in their stationary and stable position atop an overlooking hill that creates a space in the hearts of the warriors for bravery. The thief manages to remain still while the enemy army threatened. Several subjects to Shingen die for the thief as they might have for the emperor, which makes the thief feel that

perhaps he indeed embodied Shingen's greatness. Now he possesses his own honor which he will continue to redefine.

Honor, as mentioned before, is gained by demonstrating courage through immobility. In fact, the thief manages to humiliate Shingen's son who was very anxious to attack another castle by responding to the son's idea with, "Do not move. A mountain does not move" (Kurosawa). This honor, similar to the honor in *The Iliad* was given and taken away by others. One's honor was only as great as others perceived it to be.

Unfortunately, the thief is discovered as an impostor by the people and is banished from the community. In his heart, however, a great loyalty to the Takeda Clan remains. He continues to observe the actions taken by the group and follows them. Shingen's son, eager to prove his independence and capability as a leader in battle, goes off to storm the enemy castle. A great band of light is seen in the sky, interpreted as being the spirit of Shingen attempting to warn his son. He refuses to observe the warnings of the other generals and the omen in the sky cautioning him to remain immobile. The generals are aware that they will most likely not survive the battle, and that all of the Clan will be destroyed.

The Clan is indeed completely destroyed. Horses writhe on the ground and soldiers stagger forward among the carnage only to fall with their last breath and join the carcasses of their comrades. The thief displays a new form of honor at this point. He has watched the group perish and, although he had been spurned and rejected by them, he remains completely loyal to them. He picks up a banner representing the Takeda Clan and runs toward the enemy castle. He is, of course, quickly shot by the opposing army. Wounded, as he wished, he stumbles to a lake, and dies there next to a banner of the Takeda Clan.

In this way, the thief demonstrates honor in a different way than Achilles. He chooses movement to convey loyalty and courage. More importantly, this movement is not meant to be

seen by others or to be judged in any way. He possesses honor within that cannot be taken away by anyone. The honor he held previously had been taken away when he was banished from the group; but at this point he has defined honor for himself and made it more meaningful. The replacement of the old form of honor by the new is perhaps demonstrated metaphorically by the death of the thief. The thief dies in the lake where Shingen was buried, so the two now are on equal terms. Both have done something very honorable and are given the same resting place.

In both *Kagemusha* and *The Iliad* honor begins by being defined externally but is eventually transformed within a character to be defined internally. No longer are the opinion and acceptance of others relevant, but only one's standards for oneself are germane. In this way, the ideals of honor are permanently transformed to be less superficial and having more to do with the intentions of a person.

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Latinos & Bandidos

Julie Maldonado

As television enters its fifth decade, technological improvements are far surpassing what its original inventor could have imagined. We have the world at our fingertips, the unknown is now front stage in our homes. Pictures and images are flashed in front of our eyes that leave lasting impressions on us. One lasting impression that has not seemed to improve is the portrayal of Hispanic-Americans on television.

Complaints from the nations of Central and South America about the Western media's image of Hispanic peoples have been prevalent: "The nineteenth-century press considered the taking of the Alamo, and the Spanish-American War as prime examples of the violent tendencies of Hispanic people" (Miller 54). In the days of the Western, the bad guy was often based on the Mexican bandit who was presented as the most evil of screen villains. Another common image that early television held for Hispanic-Americans was that of the Latin lover. "The shift from evil to erotic was not a step up though because the role was often defined by a Mediterranean screen character rather than a Hispanic-American" (Miller 59). "Only rarely does the Chicano appear in positive imagery in Anglo-American social expression. In these few instances he is transmuted into a colorful, romantic figure full of rich, mysterious life forces. In all cases reality is carefully avoided" (Noriega 3).

One would think after all these years the characterization of minorities on television would be more realistic in regard to their culture and to fact. For Hispanic-Americans a positive role model has yet to be featured in a major television production. Instead the Hispanic-American is now portrayed as illiterate, poor and lazy. Hispanics are given menial roles as drug dealers or gang members. In most television shows where other minorities have emerged as doctors and lawyers, the Hispanic-American is

shoved in the background as the housekeeper or garbage man, with a thick accent and subservient manners.

The Western was not the only genre that caught on to the bandido stereotype. Commercials quickly jumped at the chance to use this image any way they could. One campaign was that of Frito-Lay's Frito Bandido which was launched in 1967. "The Frito Bandido was a reincarnation of the Hollywood film stereotype of Mexicans: he had a Spanish accent, a long handlebar mustache, a huge sombrero, a white suit covering a pot belly, and he used a pair of six-shooters to steal corn chips from unsuspecting victims" (Flemming 112).

The Mexican American Anti-Defamation Committee called the campaign "probably the most subtle and insidious of such racist commercials." Many protests of the ads were aimed at the Frito-Lay corporation but four years later the commercials were still running (Flemming 12).

In 1971, *Washington Post* columnist William Raspberry devoted two columns to the Frito-Lay controversy. He wrote: "The point is that ethnic stereotypes, bad enough no matter whom they depict, are intolerable when they pick on people who are daily victims of American racism."

In response to Raspberry's column critics suggested that Mexican groups could not take a joke. They figured the Frito Bandido was a cute harmless character that everyone could enjoy. Frito-Lay even commented "that in surveys conducted by outside professional research organizations in five major cities with heavy Mexican-American populations, the Frito Bandido was liked by more than 90 percent of the Mexican-American respondents" (Flemming 12). The Frito Bandido campaign, due to continued criticism from Mexican-American groups was discontinued in September 1971.

As far as other leading roles for Hispanic-Americans television has never quite known what to do with ethnic minorities. "From the start, TV either avoided casting them or, when an ethnic or

an 'exotic' was required, somehow passed over an actor of that ethnicity or nationality for the role. Instead, an actor of some vague different-ness' who looked as if he or she could pass for 'near-real' was frequently put in the part. Authenticity seemed to work against getting work" (Weiner 112). It was very difficult for Hispanic-Americans to even get roles portraying themselves in the television world. "Like similar unflattering stereotypes of other subordinate groups, those of the Chicano depict him as dirty, violent, hypersexual, treacherous and thieving, although he also often appears as cowardly, apathetic, and dormant" (Noriega 3).

In 1951, a light of hope was on the horizon. A husband and wife team went to CBS with an idea of a television show. The husband and wife were Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball. There was immediately disagreement by the network. One of the main problems was CBS' hesitation of Arnaz playing the husband in the series. "Network brass doubted that he could carry the acting for the comic role. Though a competent band leader and talented song and dance man, Desi was also a foreigner with a heavy accent" (Castleman 65). CBS executive Hubbell Robinson believed that an audience would not accept the "All-American typical redhead" would be married to a "Latin band leader, with a 'Cuban Pete' conga-drum 'Babalu' image" (Sanders 28).

With the insistence of Lucille Ball, *I Love Lucy* began. Arnaz and Ball soon took complete control of the production and formed Desilu Productions. Arnaz became appreciated for his off-camera talents. Cast members and production crew members all say Arnaz never got the credit he truly deserved. Some believed Desi was riding on the coattails of Lucy. It was later discovered by Arnaz that when he and Lucy wanted to incorporate Lucille Ball's real-life pregnancy into the show, the sponsor Phillip Morris would pull out of the deal. Desi wrote a heartfelt letter to the Morris chairman, Alfred E. Lyons saying they had given the company a number one show. Arnaz explained that he and Lucy

had creative control over the show's content and if their agency refused to cooperate with them about the storyline they would go on to find a sponsor who would. A secretary of Lyons showed Arnaz a confidential memo stating: "To whom it may concern: Don't fuck around with the Cuban" (Sanders 65). Even as Arnaz politely and professionally dealt with the situation, he was still given the label of his ethnicity instead of being considered a good businessman.

Another Hispanic character was introduced in the 1974-75 television season. Freddie Prinze was an up-and-coming young stand-up comic. Prinze co-starred with vaudeville actor Jack Albertson. *Chico and the Man* was the highest rated new show of the year. The series took place in a run down East Los Angeles garage. It was thought by many critics that this show would break most of the racial barriers by having a young Mexican performer, but in reality it was merely just another show about generation gaps.

"Ed (The Man) one day let a cheerful young Chicano talk him into a job as his assistant at the garage. Unlike the structure in many other ethnic based shows, Ed and Chico were not so much characters in conflict as two sides of the same character: one was a buoyant optimistic dreamer who believed anything was possible, and the other was an unreconstructed cynic who had seen too many high hopes turn sour" (Castleman 257). Prinze was only twenty when he moved into the top-ten series. Prinze shared the same dreams as did Chico of making it big as a Chicano superstar. The dream came to an end in January 1977: "The fusion of images made Prinzes' subsequent suicide especially shocking, and it punctured the shows premise with a grim dose of reality" (Castleman 257).

The young Hispanic-American is once again at the service of "The Man", a white business man. If it were that this young man, Chico, had such great dreams of making it why not make it in a more meaningful profession, instead of trying to better

himself in a garage? Once again the minority character must depend on his white counterpart to get out of the ghetto.

In this day and age when other minorities with their own television series are in high paying professions with big houses and well-behaved children, Hispanic-Americans are still not given the high profile role model. When speaking about minorities Hispanics are meshed in with women and blacks. Women once portrayed as good housewives, they soon turned into single working women who were able to move up the social ladder and to assert themselves to their male dominant contemporary. Shows such as the *Mary Tyler Moore Show* brought the woman's movement out of the kitchen into the mainstream and were widely accepted by the television audience. Even today's characters such as Murphy Brown display the same strong woman in a male-dominated industry.

More and more Black Americans are succeeding in their own television series. *The Cosby Show* was a top-ten television series for eight years. The Huxtables were a middle-class black family. Cliff Huxtable was a doctor and his wife, Claire, was a lawyer. Their five children were always wearing the latest fashion trends. Never did they fight over money or who ran the household. When Claire had to work late, Cliff had dinner ready on the table for her and their children when she got home. During the course of the series four of the five children even went off to college, one even a fictional black college.

Where is the Hispanic Cliff Huxtable? The Latina Murphy Brown? Nowhere in sight is there a positive role model that a young Hispanic can look to. We are still shoved into the background as maids or comic sidekicks. Only a few Mexican actors have made a slow rise in television. A. Martinez began his television career in the series *The Cowboys*. Later he went on and played Cruz Castillo on the soap opera *Santa Barbara*. Martinez played the good cop that always got his man, but yet still played the stereotypical Latin lover until he met his wife.

Even after her death Cruz Castillo had his share of lovers until the soap opera went off the air.

Martinez then went on to star in *L.A. Law*. This may seem like a prime role for a Hispanic male to appear in, but it seems that he is just there to fill the space left by another ethnic actor Jimmy Smits who left the show a few seasons earlier. *L.A. Law*, also went off the air a few years later.

Edward James Olmos had his share of the limelight also in *Miami Vice*, but he too had the air of mystery that Noriega spoke. Olmos often wore dark clothes and was always in a grim mood. He was often in the shadow of the two main stars Don Johnson and Phillip-Michael Thomas. Olmos has since risen in fame in the movies but here also he portrays stereotypes; his roles though depict the discrimination of Hispanics instead of putting them down. He played the conscience of a young Hispanic accused of murdering a marine in *Zoot Suit*. In the movie *Stand and Deliver*, Olmos also took on the role of school teacher Jaime Escalante who pushed his Hispanic students to strive for higher SAT scores in math. More recently, Olmos dove into the role of the leader of the Mexican Mafia in *American Me*. This grim picture realistically showed the hard life many young Hispanics are faced with in this world.

I was shocked to find little to no information on this topic. I wondered if it is really in no one's interest that these sort of stereotypes are still around. When the Hispanic population is growing so much in size all over this country, we still have no positive representation in the mass media. Perhaps someday the television world will wake up and realize what sort of contribution Hispanic-Americans can make to the industry. I suppose when Hispanics, as a whole, finally realize how Hollywood sees us, the negative images will cease to be. We must also, when given the opportunity, display ourselves in a positive light. The Fox Broadcasting Company gave that opportunity to three young comedians. *Culture Clash*, which is also the name the trio goes under, is the Hispanic version of another minority based show on

Fox, *In Living Color*. In both these shows, the actors are playing out the exact stereotype that the mass media portrays. It would be contradictory to say that we have come a long way in that we now have our own show, but at what price? Instead of downplaying the negative representation of Hispanics *Culture Clash* seems to think it is somehow humorous.

I think that William Raspberry's column when arguing the Frito Bandido case sums up minority representation best: "When you show that you believe the stereotype to the degree that you make it tough for a man to get a job or home or education, don't expect him to laugh at your jokes based on the stereotype" (Flemming 120).

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The Dilemma of a Neglected Shield: Icons and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

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Icons have existed for the thousands of years in hundreds of cultures. They gained a foothold in Western civilization through Christianity. The medievals were familiar with icons and their meanings. [This paper] explores the idea of religious icons and the importance of these symbols in medieval writing by focusing on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines an icon as "an image, usually of a religious nature, painted on a wooden panel" (348). Scholars debate the actual dating of icons because the images have been painted over so many times that it is difficult to judge specific dates (Rice 9). These paintings date back to the pre-Christian era in pagan times, as early as 200 B.C. (Rice 7-8). Tradition holds that iconography in the Christian world began during the life of Christ, when, according to some historians, St. Luke painted the earliest image of Mary and the Christ child. (Rice 9).

Icons fall into a shady area between religion and art (Gerhard 203). These emblems attempt to attain a mode of expression which only a few may understand, while at the same time portray moral or sacred truths so that the meaning is accessible to all (Praz 169). In order to accomplish this difficult goal, Christian artists depict Scriptural scenes and personages without

endeavoring to paint individual physical characteristics with precision (Grabar 62, 87). According to historian Rice, the church mandated stringent rules concerning the exact way in which icons were to be painted (7). Established by the sixth century, these guidelines and mandates remained fixed for hundreds of years (Rice 7). Any medieval icon will illustrate aspects of the church mandates.

A typical Christian portrait might show the subject standing, facing forward with his or her arms outstretched in prayer, a posture signifying the subject's piety and holiness (Grabar 74-75). Presenting the character in the act of prayer illustrates Mario Praz's point that these religious images aimed at teaching religious truths, practices and doctrines (Praz 169). This goal was still alive in the Middle Ages.

During the early part of the medieval era, over half of all Christian images were depicted by Biblical figures, with subjects ranging from Adam and Eve to Jesus and His apostles (Grabar 62). Despite the icon's base in religion and didacticism, changes occurred during the Middle Ages. When the medieval life of faith began to "fade" upon the advent of the Renaissance, the creation of icons declined (Gerhard 203), and icon painting quickly became the occupation of solitary monks instead of creative artists. By now the monks were not attempting to create works of religious art, but rather they were trying to please their patrons (Gerhard 204). Despite the decline of icon painting during the Middle Ages, a new method of creation was given to the art in the early seventeenth century (Gerhard 199, 203).

During the seventeenth century, artists began to paint icons in the "continuous" method, juxtaposing Old and New Testament characters to tell a story in frames (Gerhard 199). Perhaps the reader could consider it as medieval cartoon strip: instead of humor, these "continuous" pictures provided religious instruction and edification through the symbols of religion (Gerhard 200).

The various religious symbols held specific meanings,

especially for the medievals. Most icons depict different saints or religious figures. An example of implied meaning through symbolism is the angel Gabriel who is most often portrayed with Mary, holding a lily (Hallam 59). The medievals would have understood the lily to be a symbol of Mary's purity (Hallam 60). Besides Gabriel, other persons from faith were the subject of icons. For example, keys are associated with St. Peter. This symbol illustrates Jesus' gift to Peter: the keys of heaven. Michael, the archangel, is known as the warrior of heaven, so he is always seen holding a sword. When an artist depicts Adam and Eve, a serpent is included as well, alluding to the sin of these first parents. Each saint and Biblical person has a specific symbol, and the medievals would have been aware of flowers, animals or objects that were identified with specific saints and holy people.

The most painted figure, Mary the mother of Christ, always a symbol of motherhood (Hallam 11), is also a symbol of the church on earth (Grabar 76). Through Mary's gestures of prayer the artist signifies the Incarnation and the Redemption which came to earth through her (Grabar 76). This emphasis on Mary in iconology evidences her importance to the medieval Church and in medieval literature. A careful reading of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* reveals the Pearl Poet's use of icons, such as the pentangle and the image of Mary, both on Gawain's shield, which shows the poet's acceptance of the importance of icons.

In the first part of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the poet describes Gawain's shield. Painted on the inside of the top half of his shield is a portrait of Mary, a picture that sustains his courage whenever he looks upon it:

And whenever he stood in the press of fight he kept steadfast
in his mind, through all the tumult, that he drew all his might
in battle from the five joys that the gracious Queen of Heaven
had for her Child. For this reason he had, on the upper half of

the inside of his shield, a picture of the Virgin painted, so that when he looked at it his courage never failed. (*Sir Gawain* 343)

In the description of the shield, Gawain is called “Mary’s knight,” a name that portrays Gawain as a perfect Christian knight (Benson 103). After carefully readying himself for his journey to meet the Green Knight, “in full armor he heard Mass, celebrated at the high altar” (*Sir Gawain* 342), suggests that Gawain is not only a knight of the king, but also, a knight of Christ.

This “exemplary” view of Gawain begins to fade in the final sections of the poem. Here we witness Gawain’s temptations and note an absence of any mention of his shield. During Gawain’s third temptation with the Lady, the poet tells the reader that Gawain was saved from falling into sin by the grace of Mary:

And they smiled gently at each other, and fell into gay talk,
and all was joy and happiness and delight between them. It
would have been a perilous time for both of them, if Mary had
not taken thought for her knight. (*Sir Gawain* 370)

This instance exemplifies Praz’s assertion that icons make the supernatural accessible to the natural by materializing it (169).

This idea gains even more credibility when Sir Gawain meets the Green Knight at the Green Chapel. In order to understand the importance of this scene, the reader must remember the great detail about Gawain’s armor which the poet provides:

They then put the steel shoes on his feet, and clad his legs in
the steel of the finely wrought greaves, with knee-pieces hinged
to them, polished bright, and fastened about his knees with
buckles of gold. Then the fine thigh-pieces, that fitted close
to his strong sinewy thighs, and were laced close with thongs.

And then the mail shirt with its bright rings of linked steel was put over his tunic, and the burnished arm-pieces with the bright elbow-piece, and the gauntlets of steel-plate and all over the splendid gear that was to guard him on his venture.

(*Sir Gawain* 341-342)

During the second beheading scene, Arthur's honorable and courageous knight flinches (*Sir Gawain* 383). In the narration of this scene, allusion to Gawain's shield which bears the powerful image of Mary is conspicuously missing. The shield must have been lying on the ground because after Sir Gawain flinched, he jumped up and grabbed his shield (*Sir Gawain* 383). Importantly though, the shield is not mentioned until after Gawain acted in such a cowardly manner (*Sir Gawain* 383). This omission suggests a relationship between the shield's absence and Sir Gawain's cowardly "flinch."

In the romance Gawain loses his honor by not keeping his vow with Bertilak. This loss of honor can be interpreted in a spiritual sense as Gawain turning his back on his faith in an attempt to experience carnal pleasures. Because he seemingly overlooks his shield, a symbol of God's presence with him, Gawain fails in virtue and is left without courage.

The poet's powerful inclusion of this icon and others throughout his work gives the reader a sense of several underlying issues. The audience perceives the poet's faithfulness to his culture, his beliefs and his theme. In effect, the poet was reflecting aspects of medieval life which included icons and the powers that they held. Medieval audiences were not only familiar with icons but these images played a part in the daily lives of the people. It is reasonable to assume that the Gawain poet saw icons on a regular basis in church or in homes because icons were as much of a part of medieval life as attending mass. Thus, the poet knew that his audience would be able to understand the uses of icons in his romance.

The use of Mary on Gawain's shield not only relays a medieval practice concerning armor, but it also portrays the poet's belief that religious icons have a special power. The presentation of such a notion is necessary so that Gawain's ability to gain the upper hand in battles and to have his strength renewed is believable. To the poet, these icons were much more than just paintings or pieces of religious art; they were talismans for believers. The Gawain poet seems convinced that virtues, like Gawain's honor and courage, are from God and not from humans.

This concept seems to permeate the whole tale of Sir Gawain. The romance traces the knight's spiritual journey as a confident young man who is seen as the perfect Christian knight (Benson 103), and illustrates it with Gawain's journey through the forest. He travels through wilderness, searching for the Green Chapel. Keeping faith and his promise, represented by the chapel (a symbol of spirituality), was always Gawain's goal, but in the forest surrounding that chapel [spirituality] there were temptations. The temptation by the Lady could be compared to obstacles in the path of the pilgrim. By succumbing to temptations, or obstacles, the goal is lost in the shadows. Once he becomes a guest of Bertilak, Gawain progressively loses his focus on God. On his way to the Green Chapel, Gawain is intent upon his role in the work of the Lord," ...[he] troubled himself about how he was to keep Christmas, if he could not manage to see the due service of the Lord, who on that same night was born of a maiden to heal all our sorrows" (*Sir Gawain* 346), yet the poet tells us that the closer to the castle that Gawain rode, the more he was distracted by the world around him as is evidenced by such material details as:

There were fair turrets fashioned between, with many loop holes well devised to shut fast. Further in he saw the hall rising high, with towers all about, whose pinnacles rose high aloft, with carven tops cunningly wrought. (*Sir Gawain* 347)

Gawain also allows himself to be tempted by Bertilak's Lady, as she tells him: "You are welcome to my person to do with as you please" (*Sir Gawain* 358). Worst of all, Gawain throws his honor away by not fulfilling his part of the vow that he shared with his host.

Each of these actions at Bertilak's castle point to progressive loss of faith. Consequently, God does not give Gawain the courage, sought with the icon of Mary on this shield to withstand the potential beheading that he is due. This lack of courage humbles Sir Gawain and serves to remind him that he is courageous only because God sees fit for him to have courage when he is living as he should, as the perfect Christian knight. The final comments on Gawain's spiritual growth and his newly acquired "humility" (*Sir Gawain* 388) is suggested by the poet's use of iconography and confirms this reading of the poem. The poet's use of icons further establishes why this poem is considered the "greatest of medieval English Romances" (Loomis 324).

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We are proud to present Incarnate Word College's newest forum for inquiry and debate—*Quirk*.

Our goal since the beginning has been to magnify the voice of those many words that never seem to escape beyond the classroom walls. With the advent of this journal, we hope to encourage writing across the curriculum—the art of writing is not necessarily the sole domain of the English Department. In particular, we look forward to future submissions from the sciences. Nevertheless, the response to our call for submissions resulted in a wide variety of analysis and expression. The articles herein range from an exploration of the symbolism in a popular children's book to one man's personal reflection concerning the dismantling of patriarchy.

Another goal that we set out to accomplish has been achieved. We solicited submissions written in Spanish and received an interesting perspective on the various ways in which one word's meaning changes from country to country.

Articles submitted to *Quirk* were evaluated by a group of three editors. To insure fairness, the identities of the authors were withheld from the editors during the selection process.

With continued input from student contributors, we envision a life for *Quirk* beyond this semester. Our sincerest thanks go to you, reader, for supporting the art of writing and discourse at Incarnate Word College.

Adam M. Spana
Quirk Editor-in-Chief